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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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• ROUTINE

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GROUP 1
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CITE

DIST 9 FEBRUARY 1968

COUNTRY USSR/NORTH KOREA

DOI UP TO 30 JANUARY 1968

SUBJECT SOVIET CIRCULAR TELEGRAM ON THE PUEBLO
INCIDENT

ACQ (EARLY FEBRUARY 1968)

FIELD NO.

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1. ON ABOUT 30 JANUARY 1968 THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SENT OUT A CIRCULAR TELEGRAM TO INFORM SOVIET AMBASSADORS ABOUT THE PUEBLO INCIDENT. THIS TELEGRAM STATED THAT THE VESSEL HAD BEEN SEIZED BY NORTH KOREA AND THAT ON 23 JANUARY THE U.S. AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW HAD REQUESTED SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF THE VESSEL. THE SOVIETS REPLIED THAT NORTH KOREA WAS A SOVEREIGN STATE AND THAT THE USSR COULD NOT RENDER ANY ASSISTANCE.

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3 2. THE TELEGRAM WENT ON TO SAY THAT A FEW DAYS LATER PRESIDENT JOHNSON SENT A LETTER ON THE MATTER TO PREMIER KOSYGIN. THIS LETTER

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ALSO REQUESTED SOVIET ASSISTANCE IN GETTING THE VESSEL RELEASED. THE USSR FORWARDED THE CONTENTS OF THIS LETTER TO THE NORTH KOREANS AND ASKED THEM TO PROVIDE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING SEIZURE OF THE VESSEL. THE NORTH KOREANS DID NOT PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION, SO SOVIET REACTION TO THE INCIDENT HAD TO BE BASED ON INFORMATION WHICH APPEARED IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS.

3. THE SOVIET APPROACH TO THE MATTER AS OUTLINED IN THE TELEGRAM IS TO PREVENT DISCUSSION OF THE INCIDENT IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. IF IT IS DISCUSSED IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL THE SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE WILL SPEAK ALONG THE LINE OF UNMASKING U.S. POLICY IN KOREA, SUPPORTING NORTH KOREA IN EVERY RESPECT. THIS IS THE SAME POSITION WHICH HAS BEEN TAKEN IN THE SOVIET PRESS.

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